

CHAPTER II.

REFERENCES IN OTHER WORKS.

Classical and Literary:—

We have seen in the previous chapter how the history of this temple and the history of the Temple Fort and City were coeval with the history of the Pandya and other dynasties that ruled over this part of the country. So great was the fame and renown of this Temple and so high was the veneration and sanctity in which this Kshetra was held by the whole Indian continent and that too from the remotest periods, that references to the same have been found in the Ithihasa of the Mahabharata, various Puranas and other literary works. A few of the more important ones alone are attempted to be referred to here.

The Mahabharata:

Yudhistira has visited these Vrishabadhri Hills and its Tirthams during his Tirthayathra, cf.

ऋषभं पर्वतं गत्वा पाण्ड्वेषु नृपपूजितम् ।
वाजपेयमवाप्नोति नाकपृष्ठे च मोदते ॥

Vana Parva—83 Adhyaya—St. 21.

Vamana Purana.

Chapters 10, 43, 44, 45 and 46 treat of the episodes of Yama, Markandeya and the greatness of Sri Sundararaja or Lord Alagar and the Sri Nupura Ganga.

Brahmanda Purana:

Chapters 55, 72, 91, treat of Kubja Pandya's episodes and the greatness of the Sri Vrishabadhri, Sri Nupura Ganga etc.

Varaha Purana.

Chapters 40, et seq treat of the episodes of Sri Mandooka Maharshi and the greatness of these hills and the Thirthams etc. therein.

Agneya Purana.

Thulakaveri Mahatmya, Chapter 19 therein has references to Arjuna's Theertha Yatra to these hills and their Thirthams.

ततो जगाम धर्मात्मा वृषभाद्रि हरेः प्रियम् ।
 यत्र नूपुरनद्याख्या साक्षात्स्रवति जाह्नवी ॥
 अदाहूयं चतुर्लक्षं विप्रेभ्यस्स्नानपूर्वकम् ।
 पाण्ड्यस्य तातवर्यस्य भगवन्नूपुरच्युता ॥
 श्रीकान्तप्रेषिता गङ्गा साक्षात्प्रवहति स्वयम् ।
 तीर्थे नूपुर नद्यास्तु स्नात्वा दानं चकार सः ॥
 सा नूपुरनदीनाम्ना गङ्गा पतति जाह्नवी ।
 तत्र द्वादशरात्रन्तु स्थित्वा दत्त्वा धनं बहु ॥
 प्रणम्य वृषभाद्रीशं ततोऽगान्मोहनं पुरम् ।

Halasya Mahatmya.

In Chapter 35—Leela 29—Stanza 19—57 etc., the following reference is found.

स्वापदान प्रसिध्यर्थं वृषभं वृषभाचलम् ।
 अकरोत्सुन्दराधीशो हालास्योत्तर देशके ॥
 स्वकीयं स्थूलरूपञ्च तत्र स्थाप्य वृषोमहान् ।
 सूक्ष्मरूपेण चाऽगत्य पुर आस्ते स पूर्ववत् ॥
 आसीनं सुन्दराकारं सुन्दरेशपुरोवृषम् ।
 वृषमालोकयन्नेव सुखमास्ते स्वधामनि ।
 यत्काले वृषभाद्रिश्च समुद्भूतोऽति पावनः ॥
 तत्काले रघुनाथोऽपि लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः ।
 सीतां हनुमता ज्ञात्वा लङ्कापुरनिवासिनीम् ॥
 सुग्रीवेण ससैन्येन चाऽययौ वृषभाचलम् ।
 रामं द्रष्टुञ्चाऽगतेन मया मलयपर्वतात् ॥
 प्रभावं सुन्दरेशस्य ज्ञात्वा रामो महाद्भुतम् ।

Sri Villipuththure Stalapurana.

The Purana of Sri Villipuththure and the Vrishabhadri Mahatmya are interwoven in many ways. Sri Mandooka Maharshi who was cursed by Sri Durvasa on the Nupura Ganga Banks, had his Sapa Vimochana at Sri Villipuththure. The Mandooka Parvatham at Sri Villipuththure was the hill on which Sri Mandooka Maharshi was doing his penance. The shrine of Sri Sundararaja up above the hills in what is known as Kattalagar Koil is one of the most famous shrines of South India.

Jagannadha Kshetra Mahatmya: Ch. V. Page 20 St. 20.

In this reference is made to this Kshetra as follows:—

श्रीरङ्गं वेङ्कटाद्रिञ्च श्रीमुष्णं वृषभाचलम् ।

Sri Sanatkumara Samhita.— The following reference is found therein.

कार्तिकेयवपुर्धारी यतिशेखरभावितः ।
लोकाश्चामुख्यमूर्तिश्च केशवाद्यवतारवान् ॥
यजुर्वेदशिखागम्यो वेङ्कटो दक्षिणास्थितः ।

Sri Satyagiri Mahatmya:— (Page 77, Ch. IV, St. 15.)

In this is found the following reference.

वृषभाद्रो महापुण्ये नदी नूपुरसंज्ञिका ।

Brahma Samhita: of Skanda Purana.

In Gurugita (34th Chapter in Skanda Purana,)—Ashtami Pradhakshina Mahatmya or Moksha for Katora Papi, when describing the boundaries of Madura the following details are found.

वृषाद्रिरुत्तरे तस्मिन्स्कन्द नूपुरजाऽपगा ।
लोके नूपुरगङ्गेति प्रसिध्या वृषपर्वते ॥
उपत्यकायां श्रीविष्णुः परस्वामीति विश्रुतः ।
तत्रस्थितं गुहं ध्यायन्वर्ततेऽद्यापि वर्तते ।

Sri Godha Parinayam: (Tenkasi Sri Vidya Prasada Press-1896).

This is a work of Sri Vedathi Natha Battar of Srivillipuththure who is stated to have flourished several centuries ago.

Sri Periyalwar when he goes to Thirumalirunjolai accompanied by his daughter Sri Godha, addresses her thus when approaching the Kshetra.

“वत्से वसत्यस्य तदेर्वनाद्रेः ससुन्दरः सुन्दरभाट्टनाम्ना ।
अलंकरोति एनं अपत्यमभ्देः अङ्गश्रिया सुन्दरवल्लरेति ॥
तस्येदं अतितुङ्गं अष्टादशसोपान विभूषितद्वारं मणिगोपुरं आलक्ष्यते ।
कुरुशिरसा प्रणिपातम् ” ॥ Then they enter the Temple.
श्रुत्वापितुवर्चोगोदा नत्वातुङ्गवनाचलम् ।
विलङ्क्यगोपुरद्वारं विवेशद्वारिमन्दिरम् ॥

Sundara Bahustava: (By Sri Kurathalwar).

Sri Kurathalwar was the foremost desciple of Sri Ramana. It is alleged he lost his eyesight by the brutal tyranny of the Chola King's courtiers. Sri Kurathalwar is said to have got back his eyesight by praying to Sri Sundararaja in this soulful poem of his. His age was about 1095 A. D.

Skanda Purana.

At Giri Prakara Kandam Ch. 24 Palani Stalapuranam this stala is referred to in Stanza 10 page 362 as Pazhamudhirsolai. At page 97 stanza 6 the other name of this stala is given as Solaimalai. Stanza 23 at page 55 is very interesting and enlightening in that it settles a long raging controversy as to whether this is a Subramanya Stala or a Vishnu stala. This stanza reveals that this stala was as great to Subramanya as it is for Vishnu Cf.

கண்ணோராயிர மேற்கொடு காண்பதரிதர மெம்
மண்ணோராயிலுதித்த கண்ணிரிசண்டுடையோன்
விண்ணொருத “கார்பேனியன்” வீற்றிருப்பது பூர்
தண்ணொருமழிற் பழமுதிர் சோலை வேதன்டம்.

Confer : Kalambagam for a similar reference.

(Ibid) In Parvati Parameswara Samvadham—Rama Katha Prasthavam—Sanjeevi Parvata Episode-reference is made to this Vrishabhadhri.

Skanda Purana: Thirukkuttala Padalam.

This stala is referred to therein thus :

முத்திதரு பேரழகர் திருமலையி னிடைபுற்றோம் (12)

(சந்தபுராணம்) பக்கம் 16.

“எழமுதி னைப்புனத் திறைவி முன் புதன்

... ..

... .. பழமுதிர் சோலையம் பகவந் பேரற்றுவாம்”

“வளர்ந்த அழகிய தினைப்புனத்திலிருந்த தலைவியாகிய வன்னியம்மை யார்க்கு முன்னாக தம்முடைய விருத்தப்பருவமானது மிக்க இனமையின்பத் தைப்பெறும்பொருட்டு தமையனாராகிய விகராயக்கடவுள் இனமைமிக்க யான யாக வருதலை விரும்பிய பழமுதிர் சோலை தலத்தில் எழுந்தருளிய கடவுள் யாம் துதிப்பாம்”

(Ibid) Utpaththi kanda p. 16

The Nalayira Divya Prabhandhams.

The songs of Periyalwar, Sri Andal, Sri Nammalwar, Sri Thirumangai Mannan, Sri Peyalwar, and Sri Boothaththalwar, are already excerpted from the Divya Prabhandham and are printed in this Book so far as they relate to this stala. The songs of the 12 Alwars are 4000 in number and are divided into 24 Parts. Of this 123 stanzas concern Thirumalirunjolai Malai. The following analysis will be useful.

(a) The 4000 songs of the Nalayira Divya Prabhandham are classified as follows :—

1	Thiru-Pallandu	
2	Thiru-Mozhi	12 } Sri Periyalwar.
3	Thiru-Pavai	461 }
4	Thiru-Mozhi	30 } Sri Godha
5	Thiru-Mozhi	143 }
		105 Sri Kulasekhara

77

6	Thiru-chchanda-Viruththam	120	Sri Thirumazhisai
7	Thiru-Malai	45	} Sri Thondaradippodi
8	Thiru-palli-ezhuchi	10	
9	Amalanadhi Paran	10	Sri Thiruppanar
10	Kannunir Siruth-thambu	11	Sri Madhura kavi
11	Periya Thiru-Mozhi	1084	} Sri Thirumangai
12	Thiru-kurunthandagam	20	
13	Thiru Nedunthandagam	30	
14	Iyarpa 1st Thiruvanthathi	100	Sri Poihai Alwar
15	Do IIInd	100	Sri Boothaththalwar
16	Do IIIrd	100	Sri Peyalwar
17	Nan Muhan Thiruvanthathi	96	Sri Thirumazhisai
18	Thiru-Viruththam	100	} Sri Nammalwar
19	Thiruvasrayam	7	
20	Periya Thiruvanthathi	87	} Sri Thirumangai
21	Thiru-vezhi-kurirukkai	1	
22	Siriya Thiru Madal	77½	
23	Periya Thiru Madal	148½	} Sri Nammalwar
24	Thiruvai Mozhi	1102	
		4000	

(b) The numbers of songs attributed to the Twelve Saints are given below:—

1	Sri Poihai Alwar	100
2	Sri Boothaththalwar	100
3	Sri Peyalwar	100
4	Sri Thirumazhisai	216
5	Sri Nammalwar	1296
6	Sri Mathura Kavi	11
7	Sri Kulasekharalwar	105
8	Sri Periyalwar	473
9	Sri Andal	173
10	Sri Thondaradippodi	55
11	Sri Thiruppanar	10
12	Sri Kaliyan	1361
		4000

(c) The saints that have sung of this Stala of Sri Thirumalirunjolaimalai and the number of songs connected with this stala are noted below :—

1	Sri Boothaththalwar	...	2
2	Sri Peyalwar	...	1
3	Sri Nammalwar	...	46
4	Sri Periyalwar	...	34
5	Sri Andal	...	10
6	Sri Kaliyan	...	30
			<hr/> 123 <hr/>

(d) Of the twenty four parts above referred to and into which the "4000" is divided, the first ten Prabhandhams are known as Mudal-Ayiram or 1st Thousand. 11 to 13 (3 Prabhandhams) are known as "Periya Thirumozhi" which is called the 2nd Thousand. 14th to 23rd (10 Prabhandhams) are known as "Iyarpa" or 3rd Thousand and the 24th Prabhandham or Thiruvaimozhi is the 4th Thousand.

The aetiology for this arrangement is stated to be as follows. From "Thiruppallandu" upto and including 'Amalanadhiparan', 'Pranava' or 'Om-kara' is stated to be expounded, and hence finds its place as the first Thousand—'Kannunir-Chiruth-thambu' expounding as it does the purport of 'Namo-vachya' is placed next. From "Periya Thirumozhi" to "Periya Thirumadal" the Prabhandhams are stated to expound the secrets of the Great Sri Narayana Mantra and that the "Thiruvaimozhi" has been placed in the last as it establishes the principles of the Visisht Advaita Philosophy. This is stated also to be the order in which the "4000" were given to Sri Nadha Munigal by Sri Nammalwar when Sri Nadha Munigal pleased him with the chanting of the "Kannunir Chiruth-thambu" in his Deva Gana Mahima.

The Divya Prabhandhams are considered to be the quint-essence of the Vedas, nay, even more; for the Vedas complain yet

“यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसासह” while the Prabhandhams are stated to have realised the Lord. Hence when the Lord starts out in his temple processions in his Archavatara aspect, the Prabhandhams are chanted before and the Vedas after Him only. Sri Thondaradippodi's Thirumalai is stated to be the essence of Vedanthas; the Thiruchchandavirutham of Sri Thirumazhisai that of the various Sastras; and that the Thiruppavai and Thirumozhi represented the essence of the 108 Upanishads; while the Thirumozhi of Kulasekakra and the Thirumozhi of Periyalwar were respectively the essence of the Ramayana and the Bagavatha. The Thiruvirutham (Rig Veda), the Thiruvashrayam (Yajur Veda), the Periyathiruvanthathi (Atharvana Veda), and the Thiruvaimozhi (Sama Veda) are considered to be the essence of the four Vedas as noted against each. Just as the Vedas have their Vedāṅgas namely Siksha, Vyakarana, Chandas, Niruktam, Jyothisham and Kalpa so also these Dravida Vedas are stated to have their Dravida Veda Angas in the form of Periya Thirumozhi, Thirukkurunthandagam, Thirunedunthandagam, Thiruvezhukurrirukkai, Siriya-Thirumadal and Periya Thirumadal. The Lord has said “मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहम्” Bagavadgita X. 35.—of the months I am “Margha Sirsha”. Sacred as this month is to the Lord, Saint Thirumangai with the blessings and permission of the Lord brought Nammalwar from Thirukkurugure to Sri Rangam and started the Festival known as “Thiruvadhyayana Uthsava”, beginning the festival from Margazhi Sukla Paksha Ekdasi for ten days and chanting the vedas in the day and the Dravida Veda of Thiruvaimozhi in the night. This Festival after certain vicissitudes was renewed by Sri Nadha Munigal by starting a 10 days festival from Prathama to Ekadasi with the chanting of the first two thousand and calling it the “Pagal Paththu Festival” and chanting the other two thousand in the next ten days of “Ira Paththu Festival” from Ekadasi onwards. It is because the Lord is intently hearing the chantings of these Vedas before him during

these festivals, these could not be chanted in the houses for this period and has to be begun with Pallandu after the Iyarpa Sathamurai in the Temples. That the greatness of the Prabhandhas is as great as the Sanskrit Vedas could also be seen from the Sampradaya that the Uthsarjana Kala (non-chantable days) of the Dravida Vedas begin from the Thailakkappu day or Thirukarthigai day upto Margali Sukla Prathama and the Upakramakala or (chantable days) begin from that day.

Owing to the greatness of Sri Ramanuja's Nurranthathi தூற்றந்தாதி or "Prapanna Gayathri", that also has been included in the Dravida Vedas.

In the printing of the Prabhandhas connected with this Kshetra as an appendix to this work, certain 'Thalams' and 'Ragams' are noted. Orthodox Vaishnavite Sampradayins would object to these on the ground that they are innovations, and do not correctly represent the ancient "Pans" and "Thalams" but, since in some ancient and authoritative publications these were found noted, the same has been included — and after all when chanting of the greatness of the Lord, the devotee commits no transgression in choosing the Ragam and the Thalam that the finds easy, and congenial and adapted to him!

There is a tradition that these Four Thousands were almost completely lost but for a few which were kept in remembrance at Kumbakonam, and that they were got back to this world, by Sri Nammalwar again appearing in this mortal world and reciting all the '4000' once more and which Sri Nadamunigal took down to dictation.

It would be interesting to note a similar tradition prevailing amongst the Saiva Siddhantins. It is stated that the hymns of Appar (49000), Sundarar, (37000) and Sambandar (16000) passed away into oblivion. And that Sri Nambiyandar Nambi of Thirunarayure got them rescued—312 songs of Sri Appar, 100 of Sri Sundarar and 384 of Sri Sambandar through the grace of

Sri Vinayaka during the reign of Kulothunga 1st (A. D. 1190.) It is still more interesting to note that subsequent discoveries have revealed 11 songs of these saints found engraved on the stone wall of the Temple at Tiruvidavayil in the Nannilam Taluk (Tanjore District.)

Silappadikaram: (Canto II. Lines 87 to 138)

This ancient classic of Ilangovaligal a work of about 2000 years ago gives us one of the most vivid and beautiful descriptions of this ancient and holy place in the Chapter entitled "Finding of the Forest". The relevant passage where a Brahmin describes to Kovalan, the hero and Kannaki and Kaunti, the way to Madura is excerpted elsewhere as an appendix to this book. The purport of this passage is thus translated by the late Sri M. V. Subramania Iyer, M. R. A. S.

"Go by the track which has the Mount called "Sirumalai" on its right and reach "Thirumalkundram", and by the left you will come across the way to a cave beyond the forest containing deep ponds in which winged beetles sing melodious songs and intersected with clumps of trees, low fields and cool flower groves.

"Inside the above cave, there are three Poigais called "Punya Sravanam", "Bavakarani" and "Ishtasidhi", which are so sacred that their names have spread far and wide and so renowned that they are worthy of universal and perpetual admiration, owing to their being praised by the Devas.

"If among these, you bathe in "Punya Sravanam", you will understand the Grammar of "Ainthira Viyakaranam" written by Indra. If, again, you bathe in "Bavakarani" you will have an insight into the previous birth which has led to the present one. (But), if you bathe in "Ishtasidhi", you will attain whatever you think of.

"If you desire to enter the above cave and worship (with folded hands) the beautiful feet of Him, the Supreme One Who

is in that very exalted Mount and go round it thrice, meditating (on Him) with your mind and praising (Him) with your tongue, from under the shade of a Kongu tree having bright flowers of blossomed buds on the banks of the Silambaru which has penetrated the land so that it may be cleft in twain, there will come out a Maid, like a streak of gold and lightning, having hair which may be arranged in five ways with shoulders wearing a curved Thodi (Ancient Vanki).

"And she will say "I live at the foot of this Mount. I am called 'Varothamai'. If you can but tell us the things that give us pleasure, in this world, pleasure in the next and *the* pleasure which endureth for ever, over and above the other two, I shall be yours. Oh you the great ones ! I shall open for you this door".

"In the good way opened and pointed out by her, many are the great ways at intervals. (Beyond), there is a double door. Further on, there will appear a Maid, fair as a picture painted (on a canvas) and, if you tell her what the pleasure is which hath no end, she will grant the (above) three things which you desire.

"Even if these things be not told, I shall not injure you but make you go your own long away. If however, these things be told, I shall take you to the Poigais and show them to you with their names.

"If you bathe in any of the Poigais, according as you may desire, meditating on, and praising, with your tongue, the two Manthras of "five letters" (Panchakshara) and "eight letters" (Ashtakshara) (appertaining to the Vedas) difficult of recitation and comprehension, the benefits resulting therefrom will be such as cannot be attained by even those engaged in penance.

"If you do not desire the benefit of such Poigais, you may preferably think of the Bright Feet resembling lotus flowers of Him Who is on that mount; and then you will behold the Flag whereon is painted the Figure of the (Garuda) Bird and His

beautiful Feet will receive you—relieving you of the pain of birth”.

Navaratna Chintamoni Churukkam “100”.

At page 39 of this work a reference to these Hills is made and the same is excerpted as an appendix to this book.

Paripadal.

This ancient classic of Ilamperuvazhudhiyar (100 B. C.) has been expounded by Maruthuvan Nallachyuthan.

The 15th Stanza of the Paripadal refers to this Stala and the same is also excerpted as an appendix to this book.

The excerpt gives us an interesting revelation that at the time of the Paripadal the Lord was worshipped here as Sri Krishna and Sri Balarama who were both inseparable and who were compared to the Sea and the Mirage, or Word and its Meaning. The shrine of Balarama is nowhere found in these Hills now. Nor for the matter of that anywhere else in India for the present. The cult of Balarama, and installation and worship of his idol, and constructing shrines for him and worship being offered to him seem to have been quite common during the Sangam and pre-Sangam periods. Paripadal was a work of more than 2000 years ago. But even then this stala was considered to be of very great and ancient renown :

Oosi Muri.

The author of this classic was the famous poet Idaikkadar, who lived about 2000 years ago at Thirumalirunjolai or Irungunram (இருங்குன்றம்) as it was more popularly known in his time. Idaikkadar was the president of the “Maruththuva Manram” (மருத்துவமன்றம்) at Thirumalirunjolai. This Medical Academy was the foremost one at the time in the country and attained much popularity under Idaikkadar’s aegis. Interesting and valuable references to this Medical Academy or Maruththuva Manram at Irungunram (Sri Alagar Hills) and

much valuable information concerning this place are found in this poem. The poem is so named as "Oosi Muri" since it is one in the writing of which the style or Oosi or Ezhuthani fails to perform its function properly or efficiently, and because the finesse of the poem is such that its full greatness and glory could be appreciated only in its musical setting and could not be completely reduced to writing in the palm leaf with the help of the material Oosi or style.

Thirumurugattrupadai.

This was a work of the last Sangam. This poem is stated to be the 1st of the Pathuppattu. The author of this work is the famous Nakkira Devar son of Madhurai Kanakakayanar. Sri Nakkirar was the President of the then Sangam of 49 Poets who were all more or less divinely inspired poets. The work possesses a splendid commentary by Nachchinarkiniyar but which is considered to be caviare to the general. The work is in praise of Sri Subramanya and the six places where he is in Sannidhya. The six places are called Padai Veedus of Sri Murugan. They are as follows:—

- (i) Thirupparangundram—place of Sri Deva Sena's marriage which is considered to be the *Mooladhara Stala*.
- (ii) Thiruchchir Alaivai or Thiruchchendure — scene of Soora Padma's vanquishment — *Swadhishtana Stala*.
- (iii) Thiruvavinangudi or Palni — *Manipooraka Stala*.
- (iv) Thiruveragam or Swamimalai—Gurumurthi Avasara darsan — *Anahata Stala*.
- (v) Pazhamudhirsolai or Alagar Malai — *Visudhi Stala*.
- (vi) Kunruthore Adal — *Agnya Stala*.

Besides the Six Padai Veedus, the more important Stalas that go to comprise the Kunruthore Adal Stalas are: Thiruttani (place of Sri Valli's marriage), Kunnakkudi (Bala Subramanya), Sikkil (Singara Vadivelar), Mayilam or Thirumayil Adi

(Mayoora Vahana), Kathirgamam, Thiruvengadam, Thiruthanigai, Tiruchchengadu, Thirupporure etc.

In praising the Lord of these hills Sri Nakkirar says that He is so easy of approach to His Devotee where ever he may happen to feast Him, wherever He may be prayed for, wherever the Devotee in his exuberance of spirit may dance in trance, be it a hill or a dale, forest or a Sola, bed of a river or bank of a tank, whether in the village en route or the junctions of the roads whether they be threefold fourfold, or fivefold or whether under the shades of a Tree or on a shadeless open. The whole description with reference to Pazhamudhir Solai, made by Sri Nakkirar nearly 2000 years ago looks so exactly correct to-day that one cannot but identify every item described here in this work with those now noticed in the Grand March of Lord Alagar during the Chaitrotsavam from Sri Alagar Hills to Vandiyur and back. From the slaughter of the sheep, the Aradhanas in the Mandapams and Sholas, the songs, the dance, the trance, the music, the showering of flowers, the burning of the incense etc. up to the final Aradhana, it is difficult to miss the significance.

The reference to “சூருதியோடு வினை இயற்றுவோனாரிடு சிப்பலி செந்த” in II 233-A of Thirumurugattruppadai and which means “pure white rice offered to Sri Muruga as a small offering after being mixed with blood” when his worship is being carried on, has a significance which has to be pondered over in this Temple, where sheep and goat and fowl are slaughtered for offering in their thousands. The aetiology of this in a Vaishnavite Temple has baffled the investigation of scholars. As Mayon or Black God was the god of the Mullai or pastoral region so Seyon or Red God was god of the Kurunji country. Seyon was the Murugan of the Kurinji or hilly country. Being the patron of pre-nuptial love his devotees would offer him balls of rice mixed with the red blood of the goats sacrificed as per their vows. Being a hunter the weapon favoured by him is Vel or Spear. These Vels are offered at Sri Alagar Hills by Devotees even to-day

and these are placed at Sri Padinettambadi shrine; some silver ones also fall in the offertory. On account of the Vel being his chief weapon he was hailed in the Kurinji as Velan or spear man and his priest was also called a Velan. Can the priest at the Sri Padinettampadi shrine who is a Velan be in any way connected with these offices? The frenzy, the obsession, the magic rites, the songs, the Veriyattam, the readings of the past, the predictions for the future, the diagnosis of the diseases, the diagnosis of possessions of spirits and devils, cures prescribed for these ills and sores, all these that one sees in the Temple area even now would afford ample materials for a thoughtful solution.

There is a controversy raging about the identity of Pazhamudhirsolai with Thirumalirunjolai. Many state that they are identical. But scholars like Sri P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar are of the view that it is not and advance the theory that "பழமுநீர் சோலைமலைகிழுவோலே" simply means "Lord of the Hill on which there are orchards where fruits mature". (History of the Tamils P. 564.)

There is yet another set of scholars who entertain no doubts as regards the identity of Pazhamudhirsolai or Solamalai with Alagar Hills. The reasons advanced by Sri V. Venkatasubba Iyer of the Epigraphical Department in his excellent brochure on "Sri Alagar Hills and its Inscriptions" are excerpted below for the interest it bears on the subject. At page 4 (ibid) it is stated that Alagar Koil must have been a Saivite centre before it was changed into a Vaishnavite one because:—

- (a) The presiding deity is known only as Paramaswami in inscriptions.
- (b) there are shrines to Vigneswara and to Kshethrapalaka in the temple where the "prasadam" is still the scared ashes.
- (c) there are shrines for all the minor deities of the Saivite Hierarchy within the Fort and

(d) much importance is attached to Karuppannaswami sanctum near which a Subramanya shrine is also said to have existed.

Murugan Stuti: St. 5:

The existence of Sri Subramanya's shrine in this Solai Malai is referred to in "Murugan Stuti". The reference is excerpted below:—

விட தாதரோடு வரும்போது ஒம்மை வெகுயாகு—கம்பினேனே
குறவாது வள்ளி யிடமாக வந்து மயிலேறி வந்த—செல்வா!
திடமாக கோலை மலை மீதில் வாழும் திருமால் நமத்த—மருகா
வடமான் பழனி வழுவேனு காதா வரவேனு மென்றனருகே.

Thiruppugal :

The author of this work is the famous Sri **Arunagiri-nathar** son of Sri Pattanaththar. He refers to Pazhamudhirsolai or Solamalai in about 16 stanzas. Please vide stanzas 510 to 525 at pages 400 to 412 in Volme I of "Thiruppugal" published by Messrs. E. M. Gopalakrishna Kone of Madura. The age of Pattanaththar is ascribed to various dates by Scholars. But we must remember that Pattanaththar was so named because of his citizenship in Pattanam or Pugar or Kaveri Poom Pattanam whose submersion in the sea is believed to have occurred shortly after Kannaki's translation to Divinity and which is acknowleged by many to have taken place about 2000 years ago. The relevant portions are excerpted as an appendix to this book.

Alagar Anthathi :

Alagiya Manavala Dasar alias Pillai Perumal Iyengar was the author of this poem. The whole work deals with the glory of the Lord and the Thirumalirunjolai Mount. Pillai Perumal Iyengar was also known as Divya Kavi Alagiya Manavala Dasar. He was a disciple of Parasara Battar, son of the great Kooraththalwar, Sri Ramanuja's ardent disciple. Since Parasara Battar was born in Saka 1045 or A. D. 1123, Pillai Perumal

Iyengar must have flourished about 1150 A. D. during the reign of Maravarman Sri Vallabha. Pillai Perumal Iyengar is reported to have been the son (or according to others grandson) of Thiruvarangathamudhanar, a disciple of Sri Bashyakar and author of the famous Ramanuja Noottran-thathi. The theory that he was a contemporary of Thirumalai Nayak is not borne out. His place of birth is stated to be Thirumangai in the Chola country. He was the Pandiyan king's Rayasam. He was a very devout Bakta. When once in the royal presence, he was suddenly rubbing his cloth with his hands as if galvanised saying the while "Krishna, Krishna". Questioned on this, the devotee replied, that Sri Ranganatha was just then in the car in the car procession at Sri Rangam and that the curtain of the car caught fire by a near by torch and that he was fast putting out the fire that way. This was immediately verified and found true. He was the author of the "Ashta Prabhandhams", consisting of Thiruvaranga Kalambagam, Thiruvarangathu Anthathi, Thiruvarangathu Malai, Sri Ranganathar Oosal, Thiruvengada Malai, Thiruvengadathu Anthathi, Alagar Anthathi and Nootrettu Thiruppathi Anthathi.

Alagar Pillai Tamil:

This was a work by Swami Kavi Kala Rudhrar of Vembattur. He is stated to have belonged to the family of Thirumalai Andar an Adhyapaka of this temple and is believed to have flourished about 200 years ago. The work is in praise of Lord Alagar following the "Pillai Tamil Literature".

Alagar Kalambagam.

The author of this work is one Kavi Kunjaramier of Vembattur. Some say it is Hari Baktha Navalar. Some others are of opinion that it is the work of not one author but a joint work of all the Sanga Pulavars of Vembattur. It is an ancient work several centuries old. Being a very popular one the work is printed as an appendix to this book. The greatness of this Kshetra is referred to in its very first stanza thus:—

“பழமுதிர்கான்மறை குமுறப்பதின்மர்கண் முத்தமிழ் முழங்கப்
பழமுதிர் பஞ்சேரலைமலை”

How these hills were once reverberating ever with the chan-tings of the four Vedas that had no origin, and with the songs of the *Ten Alwars* in the Dravida language and how beautiful these hills were with their Sholas full of fruits and flowers ever showering on their emerald slopes, could be seen from this reference. It also appears that during the time of this poet, the poems of the *Ten Alwars* were prevalent, the 1st three Alwars being taken as a single entity. His age must therefore have been long before Sri Nadha Munigal who had collected only what was revealed to him.

The reference by Kalambagathar to this stala being a Subramanya stala also is significant and noteworthy.

அஞ்சராலும் மணிசீராமுங் கிடைக்கரிய
மஞ்சீரமாறுவனகிரியே—பஞ்சவர்ணம்
பங்கங்களைந்தான் பளிர்வாடுகண்ணோருவர்
பங்கங்களைந்தான் பதி.

which can be translated thus :—“ Oh Thou Vanagiri (Sola Hills) blessed with the rare and noble epithet of Manjira, whose slopes are beautiful, whose rivers bear excellent waters ever flowing, cool as the black clouds, who art the Pathi (Thiruppathi or Holy Place) of Lord Alagar who saved the Pancha Pandavas from the disgrace caused to them and who has ever by his side Sri Subramanya (the Six faced or Twelve eyed God) the unique God!

Alagar Killai Vidu Thoothu:

The author of the work was Pala Pattadai Chokkanadha Pillai of Vandiyure who flourished about the end of the 17th century or beginning of the 18th century. For the composition of this poem the then Nayak King of Madura gave the poet certain manibhams which have been recognised by the British Government in T. D. No. 950. This work has now been

published with an instructive introduction and notes by Mahamahopadhyaya Sri Dr. *Q. Swaminadha Iyer*. The work belongs to the Sandhesa or Toothu class of literature like the Mega Sandhesa of Sri Kalidasa and is stated to possess high literary merits.

Solamalai Kuravanji:

This is a work by Kavi Kunjara Barathi of Perungara dealing with this stala.

Shodasa Kalamalai:

This is a work by Jambuliputhure Krishna Iyengar having reference to this stala.

Prapannamritam.

This is a work by Sri Anantarya. This work treats of the history of the Sri Vaishnavas of South India. Reference is made in the work to the fact of the idol of Sri Renganatha having been removed from Sri Rengam to this Temple during the Mahomedan invasions. Tradition says that the idol was kept hidden in a well here called Manjal Kinar or Alagiya Manavaian Kinar (அழகிய மணவாளன் கிணர்) which is situate in the valley and river bed west of the Temple.

Janana Sagaram:

This is a work by the famous Boga Muni. References to Sri Alagar Malai, the divine damsels, Karuppannaswamy Temple, the caves, the Doors, the forests, the Sapta Rishis, Sapta Kannikas, the Temple of Thirumal, the Devatas the Jyotir Vriksha are all made. This is excerpted as an appendix to this book.

Jaina works.

There are eight mounts which the Jains hold sacred even to this day. Of which this Thirumalirunjolaimalai is one. Cf. the reference:

“பரக்குள் குருகுலம் பரக்குள் பத்தி
இருந்தேன் போர்த்தாயினா—அருங்குன்றம்

என்றென்று வெந்து மெருத்தியம்ப வண்ணம் கிஞ்சு
சென்றெருட்டுமோ பிறவித்திந்து.

Raya Vachakamu.

This is a Telugu work dealing with the life and history of the Vijayanagar Emperor Krishna Deva Maharaja. When dealing about the travels of Krishna Deva Maharaja, the work states that the Emperor halted at Sri Alagar Hills for three days in February 1517.

Divya Soori Charitham.

This is a work of Sri Garuda Vahana Pandithar who was a contemporary of Sri Manavala Mamuni (A. D. 1600). The meeting of Sri Godha and Sri Sundararaja at Tallakulam is described in this work along with the exchange of Garlands and other details that seem to have been in observance even in those early days.

Sri Hamsa Sandhesa. (St 49)

This is a work of the great Sri Vedanta Desika who was born in 1269 A. D. The following beautiful reference is found in stanza 49 of the poem.

नित्यावासं वृषभमवलं सुन्दराख्यस्य विष्णोः
प्रत्यासीदन् सपदि विनमद् भागदेयं न तस्याः ।
यस्योत्सङ्गे बलि विजयिनस्तस्य मञ्जीरवान्तम्
पाथोदिव्यं पशुपति जटास्पर्शशून्यं विभाति ॥

Sri Sundararaja Stotra.

A poem on Sri Sundararaja is attributed to Sri Sankaracharya's authorship. According to Sri N. K. Venkatesam Pantulu's researches (Darma Rajya 28-1-37), Sakara's age is stated to be 509 B. C. to 447 B. C., and which he says is fixed on "absolutely historical, literary and traditional evidence and based on our own national sources and rules of reasoning." But Sri Sitarama Sastry ascribes the 6th century A. D. as Sri Sankara's age. And Sri Surya Naryana Rao states that his date

of birth was the Vaisaka Sukla Panchami of the year Easwara corresponding to the Vikrama Saka 14 (44 B. C.)

Koil Olugu.

According to this work during Malik Kafur's invasion of the south, and during his attack on Sri Rangam, Sri Pillailoka-chariyar is stated to have carried Lord Sri Renganatha in Saka 1249 or A. D. 1327, to Joythishkuti and then to this Thirumalirunjolaimalai for safety's sake. Sri Renganatha was at Alagar Hills for one year. It was during Sri Renganatha's stay at the Hills the famous well called "Alagiya Manavalan Kinar" is stated to have been constructed. Tradition says that Sri Renganatha was secreted here. The Koil Olugu goes on to state that Sri Renganatha then departed (probably due to the advent of the Mahomedan army still further south) to Calicut, Thirukkanambi, Punganure, Thirunarayanapuram, Thiruvengadam, Singarapuram, etc. when after a long period of about 43 years, Sri Renganatha came back to Srirengam in saka 1293 or 1371 A. D. on the 17th of Vaikasi Parithapi and was duly installed by Koppanna Udayar (Gopan Arya of Gingee) Viceroy of Vijayanagar (Olugu p. 119). It appears that Sri Renganatha had been taken to Sri Alagar's Fort (Thirumalirunjolaimalai) on a previous occasion also, during the time of Uyyakondar, Manakkal Nambi, and Alavandar when Orissa invaded Srirengam. During this time Sri Renganatha stayed here for one year (Ib. 37). Thrice has Sri Renganatha come out of Srirengam, out of which on two occasions the then practically impregnable Fort of Alagar at Thirumalirunjolaimalai afforded safety and protection. On the 3rd occasion it is stated that it was to Delhi that Sri Renganatha was taken.

Sri Ramanuja Nootranthathi, Nootrettu Thiruppathi Anthathi, Sri Satagopar Anthathi, Sundara Bahu Kavacham, Sri Sundraraja Ashtotharas, Kurunthore Adal, etc. are some of the other works of remote periods that have reference to this Stala.